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ABSTRACT

This paper presents findings of an analysis of kindergarten report cards from Ohio public schools and discusses implications of the findings for policy makers, program planners, and curriculum supervisors. A total of 76 school districts were selected in a random sample of 331 which was stratified to represent 6 types of school districts. Data were analyzed to determine (1) how report cards were organized; (2) how information was reported; (3) what children were expected to know and to be able to do; and (4) what philosophies of early childhood education or theoretical orientations were evident. Findings in each of these areas are reported. The analysis led to three conclusions. First, there are specific skills that a kindergarten child is expected to master, with major emphasis being in the areas of work habits, reading readiness, and math readiness. Second, the push in Ohio public schools is toward an academically oriented kindergarten most heavily influenced by the behaviorist perspective. Third, the predominant marking systems present negative evaluations for the kindergarten child, assuming that a child can fail in the skills and behaviors expected of a kindergartener. Such a system, it is argued, further reinforces a behaviorist perspective in contrast to a maturationist or interactionist orientation. (RH)

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Evaluation of Kindergarten Students:

An Analysis of Report Cards in Ohio Public Schools

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Evaluation of Kindergarten Students:

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Kindergarten has emerged as an important and controversial topic in education today. Many advocate replacing the half-day model with full day programs. Others push for an academically rigorous, competetency-based approach. Yet there are those who decry the pressures placed on young children and emphasize the need for a nurturing, less stressful kindergarten environment. As educators face decisions about how these conflicting views will be resolved, it is essential that information about existing programs and their effects be considered. The purpose of this paper is to provide such information in the area of kindergarten evaluation. The paper presents findings of an analysis of kindergarten report cards from Ohio public schools and discusses implications of these findings for policy makers, program planners, and curriculum supervisors.

Review of Related Literature

Almost twenty years ago Widmer (1967) outlined the role of the "good" kindergarten. Some of the nine elements discussed include promoting and maintaining the child's health and physical development and providing a rich environment for living, thinking, and learning. Emphasis was placed on concrete experiences for "cultivating" the foundation for the three R's. Recent articles present a very different picture of today's kindergarten program. Florida, for example, has a kindergarten curriculum of 200 content area objectives that are to be met during the school year (Webster, 1984). Kindergarten programs seem to reflect widespread concern among parents for increased academic achievement. As Simmons and Brewer (1985) point out, typical questions asked by kindergarten parents include "When

will my child begin to read?" "When will my child learn to count to a hundred?" "Why hasn't my child learned to write the alphabet?" Many schools now include formal reading programs complete with text books and workbooks in their kindergarten classrooms (Davis, 1980). Uphoff and Gilmore (1986) describe "curriculum shove down" in which the kindergarten curriculum now includes much of what previously was reserved for first grade. While "kindergarten used to mean brightly colored paintings, music, clay, block building, bursting curiosity and intensive exploration," today's trend is toward a more formalized kindergarten curriculum (Martin, 1985, p. 318).

Many have expressed concern over the direction that kindergartens are heading. Elkind (1981) provides a detailed discussion of the "hurried child" and the possible damaging psychological consequences for young children faced with too much pressure. In a study of children's age at the time of kindergarten entrance, Uphoff and Gilmore (1986) concluded that children who are not developmentally ready when they begin school may face life long disadvantages. They state "the present situation has built-in expectations and requirements that are simply too much too soon for too many young children" (p. 15). Martin (1985) laments the emphasis on skill instruction in today's kindergarten. And Davis (1980) believes that "time wasted on workbooks, the paper-and-pencil 'thief' of a well balanced program, means a reduction of vivid, first hand, worthwhile experiences that are the birthright of the 5s" (p. 77).

In 1977, seven major educational organizations including the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the National Council of Teachers of English issued a statement of concerns regarding pre-first grade reading instruction. One of their six major concerns was directly related to the kindergarten issue:

> A growing number of children are enrolled in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classes in which highly structured pre-reading and reading programs are used. (Young Children, 1977, p. 25)

Conflicting viewpoints regarding the direction kindergarten ought to take have their roots in various perspectives regarding child development. Theories of child development which influence educational practice are dominated by three major schools of thought: maturationism, behaviorism, and interactionism. Maturationism, espoused by Gesell and others, stresses the role of genetically controlled biological change in behavior and learning. In contrast, behaviorism, associated with Skinner, emphasizes the importance of environmental factors. Interactionism, also known as cognitive-developmental theory, is based on the work of Piaget and views development as the dynamic interaction of the individual with his/her environment.

From each of these theoretical orientations, implications about education can be generated. According to Schickedanz, Schickedanz, and Forsyth (1982), a maturationist viewpoint may lead one to say: "We don't accept children for kindergarten until they are at least five years old." or "We don't teach reading in the kindergarten. The children are not ready yet " (p. 51). On the other hand, a behaviorist approach to education is revealed in the following statements: "In our math program, children are asked to learn just one small step at a time. Thus, success is ensured and children want to continue working with the materials." or "Children who answer questions correctly will receive a gold star on their papers" (p. 60). The interactionist viewpoint is reflected in such statements as "When children answer questions incorrectly, ask them why

they answered as they did before deciding how to help them arrive at the correct answer." or "Children learn best when they are interested in what they are doing " (p. 63).

These three theories have influenced current educational practice. Concerns over age at entry to kindergarten are motivated by maturationist thought. The trend toward competency based, skill oriented instruction derives from a behaviorist viewpoint. The proliferation of concrete, manipulative learning materials is a product of an interactionist orientation.

In spite of all the attention and discussion regarding kindergartens, a paucity of research exists which analyzes kindergarten programs. One way to determine the goals, organization, and content of a program is to examine the criteria used in evaluating the children who participate in that program. A review of research on pupil assessment indicated no studies which addressed report cards in kindergarten. In an attempt to provide a critical analysis of kindergarten report cards and how those report cards reflect the nature of the kindergarten programs they represent, the present study was conducted. The following questions guided the research:

1) How are kindergarten curricula organized?
2) What is included and not included in existing programs?
3) How are children evaluated and how is this information communicated to parents?
4) What are the underlying assumptions concerning how children learn and develop?
5) What aspects of child development seem to be most valued?

Procedure

The researchers sought report cards which would include a diversity of school districts (large, small, urban, rural, and suburban).

Seventy-six school districts in the state of Ohio were selected in a stratified random sample of 331 public school districts provided in a listing by the Ohio Department of Education. The sample was stratified to represent six types of school districts: a city with more than two high schools, a city with one high school having more than 1500 students, a city with one high school having between 1000-1500 students, a city with one high school having less than 1000 students, exempted village school districts, and county offices.

The superintendent of selected districts received a letter from the researchers explaining the purpose of the study and requesting a copy of the district's kindergarten report card. Sixty-one report cards were received for a return rate of 80.3%. The report cards themselves served as the data base from which the analyses of this study were made.

Findings

The findings of this study are reported in the form of analytic generalizations. Report card data were analyzed to determine (1) How report cards were organized (i.e., What categories were used and what elements were included in the categories?); (2) How information was reported (What marking procedures were used?); (3) What children were expected to know and to be able to do (Based on the evaluation categories of the report cards, what were the expectations for students?); and (4) What philosophies of early childhood education or theoretical orientations were evident (Did the report cards reflect maturationist, behaviorist, or interactionist perspectives?). Findings in each of these areas (Organization, Marking Patterns, Expectations, and Theoretical Orientations) are reported below.

Analyses of "organization," "marking patterns," and "expectations" were low-inference frequency counts. Report cards were examined to

determine what kinds of categories existed within each area, then counts were made within categories and percentages of frequency calculated. Analyzing report cards to identify "theoretical orientations" involved the application of specific criteria to report card data. These criteria and analysis procedures for classifying cards are described in the theoretical orientations section below.

Organization

Three basic organizational patterns were found. Three of the sixty-one report cards analyzed (4.9%) organized skills and attributes into a sequence with different sets of specific requirements designated for evaluation chronologically, by quarterly reporting periods. Four cards (6.6%) consisted of lists of discrete skills to be evaluated and checked off as mastered. In the final category, which included fifty-four cards (88.5%), strands were used to organize information. Examples of strands included Language Arts, Math, Work Habits, Social/Emotional, Motor, Kindergarten Skills, Arts, and Perceptual Development.

Chronological Lists. These report cards were organized into sets of skills and attributes divided by report card periods. In this model, a set of skills was identified for evaluation during the first report card period, a different set designated for the second period, and so on. All three cards of this type used checking procedures for marking student progress. A statement (e.g., "I can match numerals with sets") was presented and the teacher placed a check to indicate accomplishment of the skill.

Examples of items included in the first and last nine-week periods are listed below.

First Report

Prints First Name

Classifies Objects by Size and Shape

Counts Objects in Sequential Order

Fourth Report

Writes Lower Case Letters

Recognizes Color Words in Print

Subtracts Two Sets of Objects

Along with "academic" skills, motor skills such as "Hops on One Foot;" personal skills such as "Knows Telephone Number;" and social skills such as "Works Well With Others" were reported within this chronological pattern. What made this organization different was that skills were not classified as academic, motor, personal, or social; the skills were simply listed by time period.

Skills Lists. Like chronological lists, skills lists were not organized into specialized categories. The four report cards analyzed in this group were comprised of lists of skills which were evaluated at the end of each marking period. A skill was stated (e.g., "Counts Objects in Sets") and a place for evaluating that skill each reporting period provided. Check marks or x's were used for three report cards and a set of letter-symbols for the fourth (S=Satisfactory, N=Needs Improvement, I=Improvement Shown). The range of skills covered in report cards organized into lists was comparable to the range in other organizational formats.

Strands. The major portion of report cards analyzed (88.5%) were organized into categories of like skills, attributes, and/or attitudes. These categories represent strands of emphasis in the curriculum. A variety of labels were used by school districts to identify strands. Statistically, the most frequently used labels included the following (percentage indicates proportion of fifty-four report cards analyzed): "Work Habits" 68.5%; "Reading Readiness" 55.6%; "Math" or "Math Readiness" 51.8% ; "Social Development" or "Social and Emotional Development" 38.9%; "Language Development" or "Language Arts" 37.1%; and

"Physical Development" 25.9%. A detailed analysis of what was included in various strands will be reported below under "Expectations." The average number of strands for report cards in this group was just under 7 (6.96); the number of strands found most frequently was 6; and the number of strands ranged from 3 to 12. It should be noted that in five report cards, subject matter areas (e.g., Art, Music, Social Studies, Science, Physical Education, Health) were listed without further descriptors or sub-skills. Each area identified was counted, none-the-less, as a strand.

Marking Patterns

Districts using strands organization reported performance with a complex variety of marks (symbols) and marking patterns. Initial letters or numbers were typically written in boxes or spaces (one per grading period) next to the skill or attribute being evaluated. Keys, indicating the meanings of symbols (letters or numbers), were included in every case examined. For example, under the strand heading "Fine and Gross Motor Control," one district listed such "activities" as "I can use crayons effectively" and "I can bounce and catch a ball." Boxes labeled "Grading Period" were numbered 1-4 next to each activity and the following key provided.

GRADING SYMBOLS

E - Excellent

S - Satisfactory

I - Improving

U - Unsatisfactory

Box empty- activity not introduced

At the end of each grading period, the teacher evaluated activites such as "I can use crayons effectively" and "I can bounce and catch a ball" by writing an E, S, I, or U in the appropriate box next to the

the activity or by leaving the box empty. This was the typical structure for marking strands report cards.

Because of the great variety of symbols and descriptors used the keys of the report cards examined (only three of fifty-four strands organized cards used identical patterns), it is difficult to summarize the data. What seemed most informative was to examine the frequency with which certain descriptors were used and to look at what represented the potential most positive and most negative evaluations kindergarten children could receive. Table 1 lists descriptors found most frequently and the percentage of fifty-four cards which included the descriptors listed.

- - Insert Table 1 about here - -

Table 1 reports those descriptors used most often and suggests a typical set of evaluation categories ranging from "Outstanding" as the most positive potential grade and "Unsatisfactory" as most negative. However, since the descriptors Outstanding and Unsatisfactory appear in only 14.8% and 16.7% of cards respectively, it is clear that other descriptors are used to designate most positive and most negative evaluations. In order to determine what consituted the "most positive" and "most negative" evaluations kindergarteners could potentially receive on their report cards, the analysis summarized in Table 2 was completed. For 38.9% of the strands report cards, "Satisfactory" was the most positive evaluation given. "Outstanding" was the most positive evaluation on all of the cards on which it appeared, but on less than half as many (14.8%) as "Satisfactory." Similarly, "Unsatisfactory" was the most negative evaluation whenever it was used; but "Needs Improvement" appeared as most negative on twice as many cards.

- - Insert Table 2 about here - -

It is interesting to note that almost all descriptors report relative progress against an assumed standard. All of the most positive descriptors except "Skill Mastery/Skill Achieved" compare the child's performance to a taken-for-granted standard of progress, success, or achievement.

Among the most negative descriptors, all but "Needs Time to Develop," suggest a deficit in the child's progress, experience with success, or effort. Even report cards with descriptors like those used in skills list organizations (i.e., "Skill Not Yet Introduced," "Skill Introduced-Not Mastered," "Skill Mastered"), assumed the child to be deficient in the skill area identified once it was introduced but not yet mastered.

Expectations

What are kindergarten students expected to know? What are they expected to be able to do? These were the questions which guided the analyses reported in this section. Each evaluation item on each of the sixty-one report cards (the entire sample) was examined and classified into sets of items measuring the same skill, behavior, attribute, or attitude. A summary of this analysis is presented in Table 3 which lists all of the items which were included in more than 50% of the report cards examined.

- - Insert Table 3 about here - -

The data in Table 3 do not necessarily indicate the importance of these items within individual report cards. What is indicated is the frequency with which designers of report cards across the sample agreed that certain items ought to be included. For example, all of the report cards included an item for evaluating "listening." While this suggests that listening is apparently valued by all report card designers in the sample, it does not necessarily

mean that any one might cite it as most valuable.

It should be noted that the descriptors used in Table 3 and the Tables to follow represent the authors' best efforts to maintain the conceptual integrity of the descriptors used in the report cards while putting them into parallel form for the sake of clarity. Most cards used verb phrases as descriptors, therefore verb phrases were selected for the tables. The verbs in the tables are those found most frequently in the item data. Alternative item forms found in some cards included complete sentences (such as "I can say my phone number") and noun phrases indicating a subject area (Physical Education, Art, or Music) or a motor area (e.g., Fine Motor Development).

Further analyses were made within several areas of emphasis found across the sample. Tables 4 through 8 summarize item data in the areas of Language Arts/Reading Rediness, Math/Math Readiness, Kindergarten Skills, Social/Personal Development, and Work Habits. Each table is made up of the items within that area which were included on more than 20% of the cards examined. These data give a more detailed picture of what children were expected to know and be able to do.

- - insert Table 4 about here - -

The Language Arts/Reading Readiness area (Table 4) includes items which assess abilities, behaviors, and knowledge in several sub-areas. Recognizing upper and lower case letters (91.8%) and putting sounds with letters (82.0%) were included in a large number of report cards. Expecting children to write the letters was included in fewer cards (24.6%) and requiring children to recite the alphabet (11.5%) or to match capital with lower case letters (8.2%) was included even less often. Along with knowing letter sounds, rhyming (60.7%) and sequence (42.6%) represent "reading skills" found in virtually all basel series used to teach reading in the primary grades.

There seemed to be some recognition of the importance of expressive oral language ("Expresses Ideas Clearly" - 60.7%) but only one instance (1.6%) was found in which expressive written language was evaluated ("Enjoys/Initiates Writing Experiences"). On the receptive side, listening was emphasized as an appropriate work habit rather than as a communication tool. "Shows Interest in Stories and Books" (32.8%) is an item that reflects some awareness of a language centered approach but other items indicating such an emphasis were found in only one card (the same card that evaluated expressive written language.)

It should be noted that on some report cards, items included under Kindergarten Skills (Table 6) were treated as Reading Readiness Skills (e.g., "Knows Basic Colors", "Know Address"). In addition, "Recognizing Likenesses and Differences" was classified as a Math Readiness item or Kindergarten Skill on a small number of report cards.

- - insert Table 5 about here - -

Math/Math Readiness items reported in Table 5 reflect the expectation that kindergarteners should be able to count objects (67.2%), recognize numerals (83.6%), and put these two skills together ("Matches Numerals with Sets" - 41.0%). Many cards (67.2%) also required that numerals be written, and 44.3% required rote counting. All of these math skill items included specific requirements for mastery (e.g, "Recognizes Numerals 0-9," "Matches Numerals to Sets 0-10"). Mastery through 10 was the minimum requirement found and was the standard found most frequently.

"Identifies Geometric Shapes" was occasionally classified on report cards as a Reading Readiness or Kindergarten Skill. Math operations "Adds Two Sets" and "Subtracts Two Sets" were found in a small number of report cards (9.8% and 8.2%). Measurement skills, other than "Makes Comparisons" (27.9%), were found only in the few cards (6.6%) which evaluated telling time to the hour.

- - insert Table 6 about here - -

Kindergarten Skills (Table 6) is a category constructed by the authors for organizing a set of skills which, in the data, were handled in a wide variety of ways under a wide variety of labels (from "General Development" to "Environmental Knowledge"). In a number of report cards (13.1%), separate sections with drawings depicting young children were used to report skills such as "I can tie my shoes" or "I can tell my left hand from my right hand." "Knows Basic Colors" and "Knows Left from Right" were sometimes classified as reading readiness skills, "Dressing Self" was sometimes placed with fine motor skills, and "Practices Good Health Habits" was sometimes found among social/personal items.

Music and Art expectations were limited to "participation" and were included on 60.7% and 42.6% of report cards respectively. "Participation in Physical Education Activities" was an item found in 14.8% of report cards examined. In the Motor Development Area, fine and large motor typically were broken down into specific skills. Fine motor skills (83.6%) included cutting, using pencils and crayons, and gluing. Large motor skills (65.6%) included running, skipping, jumping, hopping, balancing, and throwing and catching.

- - insert Tables 7 and 8 about here - -

The Social/Personal Development (Table 7) and Work Habits (Table 8) areas are different from areas described above in that they are not tailored for kindergarten age children. The expectations for kindergarteners in these areas are expectations used in report cards for the primary grades and beyond. It is interesting to note the degree of agreement across the data that a category of expectations specifically called "Work Habits" ought to be included ("Work Habits" was the most frequently used strand label) and that listening (100%), following

directions (90.2%), completing work (88.5%), and working independently (73.8%) ought to be evaluated in a kindergarten report card.

Using the data in the tables, it is possible to construct a typification of kindergarten expectations. Such a typification is presented in Figure 1. Items are included if they appeared in more than 50% of the sixty-one cards examined. In the next section, theoretical orientations revealed in the report cards will be described.

- - insert Figure 1 about here - -

Theoretical Orientations

An analysis was completed around the question "What philosophical orientations or theories of learning were evident?" Each report card was examined to determine if the expectations expressed in its elements (i.e., evaluation items and marking patterns) reflected maturationist, behaviorist, or interactionist principles of learning and child development. All sixty-one cards in the sample were examined and classified as Maturationist, Behaviorist, Interactionist, or Combination using criteria suggested in the work of Schickedanz and her colleagues (Schickedanz, Schickedanz, & Forsyth. 1982, pp. 48-67; Schickedanz, York, Stewart, & White, 1983, pp. 2-17). "Combination" cards were those having significant (i.e., five or more) elements from more than one orientation.

Elements counted as maturationist were those which took the child's inability to meet expectations to be a function of the childs immaturity. Marking patterns which adjusted expectations based on the passage of time were the predominant elements reflecting maturationist assumptions. "Needs More Time to Develop" and "Not Appropriate at this Time" are examples of such elements.

Behaviorist elements were those built on the assumption that "initial knowledge must look like recognizable pieces of adult knowledge"

(Schickedanz, et al, 1983, p. 11). Lists of skills written in "behavioral terms" and organized in sequences from simple to more complex were classified as behaviorist elements (e.g., "Recognizes Geometric Shapes," "Recognizes Upper and Lower Case Letters," "Writes Upper and Lower Case Letters"). In addition, marking patterns which included descriptors for evaluating student performance in relation to particular skills were classified as behaviorist (e.g., "Skill Mastered," "Needs Additional Practice," "Weak Skill").

Interactionist elements were those which recognized both individual and environmental contributions to learning. When learning processes (as opposed to products) were emphasized, when children's knowledge was evaluated as qualitatively different (as opposed to deficient) in relation to adult knowledge, and when expectations reflected a holistic or contextualized perspective (as opposed to a fragmented and isolated pieces perspective), report card elements were classified as interactionist. Some examples of such elements are "Participates in Large Group Discussions," "Demonstrates Growing Knowledge of Safety Rules," and "Uses Letter Names in Experiences With Print."

Using these criteria, no cards in the sample were identified as strictly Maturationist or Interactionist, while twenty-five (41.0%) were classified as Behaviorist. The remaining thirty-seven cards (classified as Combination cards) included significant elements of the behaviorist orientation. Within the Combination classification, sixteen (26.2% of total sample) contained significant elements of both behaviorist and maturationist perspectives, ten (16.4%) combined behaviorist and interactionist elements, and ten (16.4%) included behaviorist, maturationist, and interactionist elements.

Forty-three of the report cards in the sample (70.5%) included a note to parents which explained the report card and often described

program objectives and philosophies. Notes to parents were also classified into Maturationist, Behaviorist, Interactionist, or Combination categories. No strictly Maturationist notes were found. Seventeen of the forty-three notes (39.5%) reflected the application of Behaviorist assumptions and principles; thirteen (30.2%) were classified as Interactionist; and thirteen (30.2%) were Combination. Within the Combination set, nine (20.9% of cards with notes) combined Interactionist and Behaviorist perspectives; three (7.0%) were Maturationist and Interactionist; and one note (2.3%) combined Maturationist and Behaviorist orientations. Comparing the analyses of notes to parents and the theoretical orientations in the actual cards did not reveal clear patterns of relationship between the two. Specifically, references to interactionist notions of child development found in notes to parents were not predictive of such an emphasis in the actual report cards.

Conclusions and Implications

The results of the analysis of Ohio kindergarten report cards lead to three conclusions: 1. There are specific skills that a kindergarten child is expected to master with major emphasis in the areas of work habits, reading readiness, and math readiness. 2. The push in Ohio public schools is toward an academically oriented kindergarten most heavily influenced by the behaviorist perspective. 3. The predominant marking systems present negative evaluations for the kindergarten child, assuming that a child can fail in the skills and behaviors expected of a kindergartener. Such a system further reinforces a behaviorist perspective in contrast to a maturationist or interactionist orientation.

These conclusions suggest several implications for policy makers, curriculum planners, and educators. First, the report cards reveal

what areas are considered important for the kindergarten child to master, primarily work habits, math readiness, and reading readiness. These emphases reflect the role of kindergarten as the initial socializing agent for the work expectations of school. It is in kindergarten that the child "gets ready" for the patterns of instruction that follow as well as learning appropriate ways to behave; this socialization is deemed critical for later school success. Since instruction in the primary grades and beyond is dominated by skills centered instruction (Rogers, 1982), especially in reading and math, it is argued that kindergarten ought to prepare children for later schooling by introducing skills earlier. While the socializing role of kindergarten can hardly be debated, the weight of this role in contrast to other roles of kindergarten needs to be reconsidered. Dewey (1916) took issue with the idea that education is a preparation for life. Rather, he believed that "it is imperative that every energy should be bent to making the present experience as rich and significant as possible" (p. 56). The constant preoccupation with preparing the child for the next grade, the next textbook, or the next skill area impedes attention given to the individual child in his/her daily life experience in school.

Second, the emphasis on readiness skills and work habits obscures other important areas that were not evident in the report cards, most notably play, self-esteem, or any other affective factors such as curiosity, interest, motivation, or enjoyment. In light of developmental theory, it is quite puzzling to determine why these key items are missing. The importance of play in the cognitive, social, and emotional growth of the child is well documented (Leeper, Witherspoon, & Day, 1984; Scarr, Weinberg, & Levine, 1986; Piaget, 1951; Sutton-Smith, 1967). Similarly, after reviewing the research, Gage and

Berliner (1979) concluded that a postive correlation exists between school achievement and self esteem. If play, self-esteem, and other affective areas are included in the kindergarten curriculum, they need to be noted on the report card so parents can realize their importance in children's growth and development. If in fact, these areas are not included in the curriculum, the key question becomes: "Why not?" Why is "completes work" more important than a child's positive feelings about the formation of his/her own identity?

A third implication relates to the dominance of a behaviorist orientation in Ohio kindergartens. The marking systems which present negative evaluations for the kindergarten child assume that a child can fail in the skills and behaviors expected of a kindergartener. By contrasting "satisfactory" with "unsatisfactory" or "needs improvement", report cards implicitly refer to a predetermined standard or expectation of what constitutes "satisfactory." In receiving the appropriate mark, the child is being judged on whether or not he/she has met that standard. The wide range of individual developmental considerations among kindergarten children is not taken into account; only the arbitrary standard. It is not uncommon for children to "fail" kindergarten and therefore repeat it the next school year. This practice places the onus of failure on the child. Might we also want to consider reasons for kindergarten "failure" that may be endemic to the system itself and not due to some deficit within the child?

Finally, the expectations placed on the kindergarten child reflect a strong behaviorist orientation and seem to devalue the influence of the maturationists and interactionists in the education of young children. Both of these theories emphasize a more developmental and less judgmental orientation toward educating young children. Further, the behaviorist emphasis has led to concerns about "hurrying" children.

Elkind (1981) points out that "the pressure for early academic achievement is but one of many contemporary pressures on children to grow up fast" (p. 8). It may be that kindergarten experiences based on maturationist or interactionist principles offer programmatic alternatives which reduce pressures on young children and maximize long-term learning and development. These alternatives need to be carefully considered.

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Table 1

Most Frequently Used Evaluation Descriptors

Satisfactory	64.8%
Not Applicable/Not Yet Introduced*	38.9%
Needs Improvement	37.0%
Improving	25.9%
Unsatisfactory	16.7%
Outstanding	14.8%

*These descriptors tell parents that the item evaluated has not been presented or evaluated, but will be later in the year.

Table 2

Most Postive and Most Negative Evaluation Descriptors

Satisfactory	38.9%	Needs Improvement	33.3%
Outstanding	14.8%	Unsatisfactory	16.7%
Very Good	11.1%	Skill Introduced (not mastered)	11.1%
Skill Mastered/Skill Achieved	9.3%	Needs Additional Practice	11.1%
Excellent	9.3%	Having Difficulty	5.6%
Good	7.4%	Below Requirements	5.6%
Doing Well	5.6%	Needs Time to Develop	3.7%
Experiencing Success	1.9%	Progress slower than expected	1.9%
Achieving at Expected Rate	1.9%	Not Experiencing Success	1.9%
		Weak Skill	1.9%
		Weakness	1.9%
		More Mastery Needed	1.9%
		Needs to Apply Himself More	1.9%
		Not Meeting Expectations	1.9%

Table 3

Items Found in More Than Fifty Percent of Report Cards

Listens Attentively	100.0%
Recognizes Geometric Shapes	96.7%
Recognizes Upper and Lower Case Letters	91.8%
Follows Directions	90.2%
Completes Work	88.5%
Prints Name	88.5%
Knows Basic Colors	83.6%
Exhibits Fine Motor Control (using scissors, pencils, crayons, etc.)	83.6%
Recognizes Numerals	83.6%
Associates Letters and Sounds	82.0%
Works and Plays Cooperatively	80.3%
Works Independently	73.8%
Recognizes Likenesses and Differences	72.1%
Dresses Self (zips, snaps, buttons)	72.1%
Writes Numerals	67.2%
Counts Objects	67.2%
Exhibits Large Motor Control (hopping, skipping, balancing, etc.)	65.6%
Follows Rules	62.3%
Knows Address	62.3%
Knows Phone Number	60.7%
Recognizes Rhyming Words	60.7%
Participates in Music Activities	60.7%
Expresses Ideas Clearly	60.7%
Recognizes Name in Print	50.8%
Takes Care of Materials	50.8%
Respects the Rights and Property of Others	50.8%
Demonstrates Self Control	50.8%

Table 4

Language Arts/Reading Readiness Items

Recognizes Upper and Lower Case Letters	91.8%
Prints Name	88.5%
Associates Letters and Sounds	82.0%
Recognizes Likenesses and Differences	72.1%
Expresses Ideas Clearly	60.7%
Recognizes Rhyming Words	60.7%
Recognizes Names in Print	50.8%
Demonstrates Left to Right Progression	47.5%
Orders Events in Sequence	42.6%
Shows Interest in Stories and Books	32.8%
Understands Positional Vocabulary	24.6%
Writes Upper and Lower Case Letters	24.6%
Classifies Objects	21.3%

Table 5

Math/Math Readiness Items

Recognizes Geometric Shapes	96.7%
Recognizes Numerals	83.6%
Writes Numerals	67.2%
Counts Objects	67.2%
Counts by Rote	44.3%
Matches Numerals with Sets	41.0%
Makes Comparisons (more, less, long, short, etc.)	27.9%
Identifies Ordinals	23.0%

Table 6

Kindergarten Skills Items

Knows Basic Colors	83.6%
Dresses Self	72.1%
Knows Address	62.3%
Knows Phone Number	60.7%
Knows Full Name	37.7%
Knows Left from Right	29.5%
Ties Shoes/Bows	27.9%
Practices Good Health Habits	21.3%

Table 7

Social/Personal Development Items

Works and Plays Cooperatively	80.3%
Follows Rules	62.3%
Respects the Rights and Property of Others	50.8%
Demonstrates Self Control	50.8%
Shows Self-Confidence	36.1%
Shares and Takes Turns	32.8%
Respects Authority	29.5%
Accepts Responsibility for Actions	27.9%

Table 8

Work Habits Items

Listens Attentively	100.0%
Follows Directions	90.2%
Completes Work	88.5%
Works Independently	73.8%
Takes Care of Materials	50.8%
Has Adequate Attention Span	23.0%
Works Neatly and Carefully	21.3%

Figure 1

Typification of Report Card Expectations

LANGUAGE ARTS/READING READINESS
- Recognizes Upper and Lower Case Letters
- Prints Name
- Associates Letters and Sounds
- Recognizes Likenesses and Differences
- Expresses Ideas Clearly
- Recognizes Rhyming Words
- Recognizes Name in Print

MATH/MATH READINESS
- Recognizes Geometric Shapes
- Recognizes Numerals
- Writes Numerals
- Counts Objects

KINDERGARTEN SKILLS
- Knows Basic Colors
- Dresses Self
- Knows Address
- Knows Phone Number

SOCIAL/PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT
- Works and Plays Cooperatively
- Follows Rules
- Respects Rights and Property of Others
- Demonstrates Self-Control

WORK HABITS
- Listens Attentively
- Follows Directions
- Completes Work
- Works Independently
- Takes Care of Materials

MOTOR DEVELOPMENT
- Exhibits Fine Motor Control
- Exhibits Large Motor Control

MUSIC
- Participates in Music Activities